

## Message Text

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51

ACTION SS-25

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P R 031450Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4488

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T RABAT 0603

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR MO

SUBJ: MOROCCAN FONMIN ON MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

1. DURING DISCUSSION WITH DAVID ROCKEFELLER AND AMBASSADOR JANUARY 31, FONMIN LARAKI EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT PRESENT SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST. HE STRESSED THAT MOROCCO HAD CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED U.S. MOVES TOWARD PEACE AND IN PARTICULAR THE STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH. ONCE AGAIN, MOROCCO FAVORED SECRETARY KISSINGER'S UPCOMING TRIP TO AREA IF SECRETARY COULD EFFECT A FURTHER EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT, LARAKI STATED. IT WOULD, HOWEVER, BE DANGEROUS IF SECRETARY MADE HIS TRIP WITHOUT ACHIEVING PROGRESS TOWARD THIS GOAL, BECAUSE CONCLUSION WOULD BE DRAWN THAT HE HAD TRIED AND FAILED AND THAT STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH WAS IN FACT NOT WORKING. WHATEVER SECRETARY SAID PUBLICLY ABOUT AIMS OF TRIP, PEOPLE WOULD EXPECT HIM TO GO AHEAD ONLY IF HE HAD MAKINGS OF A CONCRETE FORWARD STEP UP HIS

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SLEEVE, LARAKI UNDERLINED.

2. LARAKI ALSO STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT SADAT WAS RUNNING VERY GRAVE RISKS BECAUSE HE HAD PUT ALL HIS EGGS IN AMERICAN BASKET. SADAT'S PROBLEM WAS NOT SO MUCH LACK OF PERFORMANCE ON ECONOMIC FRONT BUT RATHER IMPLIED U.S. PROMISE OF GREATER PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE, PARTICULARLY WITH RESPECT TO MORE RAPID ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. IF SUCH PROGRESS DID NOT MATERIALIZE, SADAT COULD BE SWEEPED AWAY, WITH UPSURGE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE IN EGYPT AS ONE DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCE.

3. FURTHERMORE, LARAKI CONTINUED, PALESTINIAN ISSUE COULD NOT BE LEFT TO DRIFT. POLITICAL VOLATILITY OF MILLION OR MORE PALESTINIANS LIVING THROUGHOUT ARAB WORLD COULD DESTABILIZE WHOLE REGION IF PROGRESS NOT MADE SPECIFICALLY ON THEIR PROBLEM. KING HASSAN, LARAKI SAID, HAD LONG BELIEVED THIS WAS KEY PROBLEM AND THAT PEACE WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED WITH PALESTINIANS THEMSELVES. DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENTS ALREADY ACHIEVED ON EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN FRONTS, LARAKI MAINTAINED, WHILE THEY GAVE APPEARANCE OF MOVEMENT, STILL LEFT MINIMAL OBJECTIVES OF PALESTINIANS IN ABEYANCE. IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY DIFFICULT FOR SADAT TO MOVE SOLELY ON SINAI WITHOUT HAVING SOMETHING TO SHOW MORE DIRECTLY RELATED TO PALESTINIANS. PERHAPS ONE WAY OF COPING WITH THIS ASPECT WOULD BE, IN CASE OF A NEW EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT, TO SPELL OUT CLEARLY WHAT WAS TO HAPPEN FARTHER DOWN THE ROAD SO THAT PALESTINIANS IN PARTICULAR AND ALSO SYRIANS AND JORDANIANS WOULD KNOW THAT CONCESSIONS TO THEM WOULD BE FORTHCOMING SHORTLY. ONLY IN THIS FASHION, LARAKI OPINED, COULD ANOTHER LIMITED STEP IN SINAI BE MADE INTO SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT TOWARD REAL PEACE IN AREA.

4. REPLYING TO QUESTION, LARAKI EXPRESSED VIEW THAT ARAFAT'S POSITION HAD HARDENED IN LAST TWO OR THREE YEARS, WHICH WAS NATURAL IN LIGHT OF DIFFICULTY OF HOLDING VARIOUS PALESTINIAN GROUPS TOGETHER EXCEPT IN HARD-LINE FASHION. BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH ARAFAT, HOWEVER, WAS NOT TO KEEP HIM OUT IN COLD, WHICH WOULD ONLY MAKE HIM MORE IRRESPONSIBLE. INSTEAD, ONCE PALESTINIAN LEADERS HAD CONCRETE RESPONSIBILITIES--TERRITORY TO ADMINISTER, BUDGETS TO DRAW UP, COMMERCE TO ENGAGE IN, AND ALL THE CONSTRAINTS AND LEGALITIES OF GOVERNING--THEY WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME MORE MODERATE, AS HAS BEEN THE CASE WITH

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OTHER ARAB LEADERS. PALESTINIANS, AND ARABS IN GENERAL, HAVE BEEN ABLE TO COME AS FAR AS THEY HAVE ONLY BECAUSE THERE HAD BEEN VISIBLE MOVEMENT FORWARD WHICH GAVE SOME HOPE OF ULTIMATE PALESTINIAN SOLUTION. IF IT BECAME CLEAR THAT THIS HOPE WAS IN VAIN, IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR ARABS TO MAINTAIN RECENT TRENDS TOWARD MODERATION. LARAKI VOICED CONCERN THAT MOROCCO, WHICH HAD BEEN AND WOULD CONTINUE TO BE MODERATE, MIGHT IN SUCH CASE FIND ITSELF ISOLATED.

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